



HEU recognizes International Day for Persons with Disabilities – December 3

Today, people around the globe are recognizing the International Day for Persons with Disabilities – a day that was established by the United Nations (UN) to create awareness, understanding and action for the legal and social rights of persons with disabilities.

An estimated 15 per cent of the world's population – or one billion people – live with a disability, according to the World Health Organization's 2014 statistics.

In 2012, CUPE National launched a year-long disabilities' rights campaign "A Solidarity of Abilities", championed by the Persons with Disabilities National Working Group. As the B.C. health services division of CUPE, HEU has representatives on this working group, including members of the union's People with disAbilities Standing Committee.

The campaign successfully raised awareness of disability issues, created working relationships with disability rights organizations, and provided educational tools and resources to guarantee the rights of union members with disabilities are upheld.

To build on that momentum, the working group turned its attention internationally by joining with the Canadian Labour Congress and Council of Canadians with Disabilities to ensure Canada fulfills its obligations to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

In 2010, Canada ratified and implemented the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, and submitted its first report on compliance to the UN in 2014.

Although disability rights activists say Canada has a long way to go in supporting people with disabilities, who often find themselves in poverty and lacking adequate care, Canada was a pioneer in securing legal protections for people with disabilities through new language in the *Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.

You can also find useful resources and information on CUPE National's website at <<http://cupe.ca/health-and-safety-workers-disabilities>>.

To find out what's happening in your community to mark December 3, visit the Council of Canadians with Disabilities <<http://www.ccdonline.ca/>>.

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